

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 and 10-30 are pending in the present application. Claims 11-20 and 22-30 are currently withdrawn from consideration. Claim 9 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 4 and 21 are amended to incorporate the cancelled subject matter and address cosmetic matters of form. No new matter has been added.

By way of the summary, the Notice of Non-Compliant states that the Amendment filed December 21, 2006 was not considered by failing to meet the requirements of 37 CFR §1.121 or 1.4. In response to the Notice, Claims 11-20 and 22-30 have been amended to include the proper status identifier "Withdrawn".

By way of the summary, the Official Action presents the following issue: Claims 1-10 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being unpatentable over Kayahara et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,269,228, hereinafter "Kayahara").

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Official Action has rejected Claims 1-10 and 21 as being unpatentable over Kayahara. The Official Action contends that Kayahara describes all the Applicants' claimed features. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Applicants' amended Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, a belt driving device including:

... an absorbing member configured to absorb shock to said driving roller or an outside body;

wherein said driving roller is arranged adjacent to where the outside body contacts an outer surface of said belt.

Kayahara describes a color electronic photo copier which includes a printer unit (2).

The printer unit (2) includes an intermediate transfer unit (20). The intermediate transfer unit

includes an intermediate transfer belt (21) to driven by a driving roller (24) and including further rollers (23) (22) and (25).¹ As shown in more detail in Figure 2, a transfer unit (30) includes a secondary transfer bias roller (31) opposite to the driving roller (24). A transfer contact/separation mechanism (33) is provided to enable the transfer unit to move into an out of contact with the intermediate transfer belt (21).² As can be appreciated, a toner image is transferred to the intermediate transfer belt (21) when the transfer unit (30) is pressed against the intermediate transfer belt (21) by the transfer/contact separation mechanism (33).³

Conversely, in an exemplary embodiment of the Applicants' claimed advancements, a belt driving device is provided which includes a plurality of rollers including a driving roller. A belt is configured to be tensioned by a plurality of rollers and driven by the driving roller. An absorbing member is configured to absorb shock applied to the driving roller or an outside body. The driving roller is arranged adjacent to where the outside body contacts an outer surface of the belt.

While the Official Action notes that item (33) of Kayahara is "apparently an absorbing member", it is unclear how the Office has come to this conclusion. In other words, as noted above, element (33) is a transfer contact/separation mechanism. As such, this element is only in contact with other rollers in certain situations (i.e., during transfer). It is unclear how such an element absorb shock in accordance with Applicants' amended Claim 1.

With respect to Claim 10, Applicants note that Claim 10 also is rejected based upon the same conclusory analysis as discussed above. Element (33) of Kayahara is more correctly described as an "actuator" there is no disclosure or suggestion of this element being used to absorb a shock or how this element would have a resonant frequency different from a periodic frequency of vibration caused by the outside body contacting the outer surface of the

¹ Kayahara at column 9 line 30 through column 10 line 35.

² Kayahara at column 10 lines 46-48.

³ Kayahara at column 12 lines 63-67.

belt. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 1 and any corresponding dependent claims as well as Claim 21, which recites substantially similar limitations, are allowable over the cited reference.

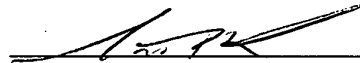
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 1-10 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Consequently, in view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application, including Claims 1-8 and 10-30, is patentably distinguished over the prior art, in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

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